GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1028
ANSWERED ON:29.04.2016
Digitization of Cable Sector
Thakur Shri Anurag Singh

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Digital Addressable System (DAS) has been made mandatory for digitization of cable television sector in the country, if so, the details thereof along with the present status of its implementation;

(b) whether the Government has set any deadlines for its implementation in all States of the country, if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;

(c) whether the Government is aware that the Multi-System Operators have not submitted Know Your Customer (KYC) forms making it difficult to assess the exact revenue being generated, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard;

(d) whether the Government has undertaken any detailed study to identify bottlenecks to achieve complete digitization in the country; and

(e) if so, the further steps taken/being taken by the Government to expedite the digitization process?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING {COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)}

(a) and (b):
DAS in the Cable Television Sector has been made mandatory in the country in four Phases.

Phase-I of the Digitization has been completed, by the cut-off date of 31st October 2012, in metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. The process is incomplete in Chennai due to pending Court Cases.

Phase-II was to be completed by 31st March 2013 in 38 cities spanning across 14 States and one Union Territory. It has been completed in all the cities except Coimbatore where the work is pending due to Court Cases.

Phase-III covering all the remaining urban areas in the country was to be completed by 31st Dec 2015. As per data provided by the Multi System Operators (MSOs), Direct to Home (DTH) & HITS Operators digitization in Phase-III areas has been almost completed in states/UTs of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Andaman & Nicobar. Digitisation in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Tripura and Dadra & Nagar Haveli is nearing completion. In other States & Union Territories is yet to be fully achieved.

Just a few days before the cut-off date of 31.12.2015 for Phase III, a number of court cases were filed by some MSO Associations, MSO Federations, registered MSOs, MSO applicants and individuals in various High Courts in the country requesting to extend the cut-off date of 31.12.2015 mainly on the plea that there is a shortage of STBs.

The Hon'ble High Court of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, vide its order dated 30.12.2015 had extended the date of implementation of Phase III by two months. It was again extended first for 4 weeks and subsequently till further orders.

On 31.12.2015, citing the order passed by Hon'ble High Court of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the Sikkim High Court had granted extension of 12 weeks.

A writ petition filed by M/s. Nasik Zila Cable Operators and others, was pending in the High Court of Bombay. The High Court in its hearing on 23.12.2015 had not acceded to the request of petitioner for extension of cut-off date. However, in the hearing held on 04.01.2016, the petitioner(s) cited the interim order passed by the Telangana and Sikkim High Courts and requested for the stay. The Division Bench of Hon'ble High Court passed the following order on 04.01.2016:

"Since the Andhra Pradesh High Court and Sikkim High Court have passed an order of status quo, in view of the observations made by the Apex Court in the case Kusum Ingots & Alloys Ltd. Vs. Union of India [(2004) 6 Supreme Court Cases 254] and more particularly, paragraph 22 of the said order, the question of grant of interim order does not arise in this case."

Subsequently, a number of other MSO associations and individuals have filed petitions in various High Courts, such as Orissa, Chandigarh, Allahabad, Indore, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Jaipur, Karnataka, Guwahati, Kolkata and Shimla etc. These Courts have either

granted extension of two months, as was granted by the High Court of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, or dismissed the petition(s) with the directions not to disconnect the cable TV network operated by the petitioner(s) and allowed them to operate in analogue system for 2-3 months.

Ministry of I&B had filed a Transfer Petition in Hon'ble Supreme Court requesting to transfer all cases and Hon'ble Apex court has transferred all such cases in Delhi High Court. Date of Next hearing is awaited.

Phase-IV, which will cover all the remaining areas in the country, is be completed by 31st Dec 2016.

(c): As per TRAI Regulations the Multi System Operator (MSO) or its linked Local Cable Operator (LCO), as the case may be, shall devise formats of application for seeking connection, disconnection, and reconnection and for obtaining and returning of set top box by the subscribers. The Regulation also mandates that every MSO shall establish, set up and operationalize its Subscriber Management System (SMS) and such SMS shall ensure efficient and error-free service to the subscribers by recording and providing individualized preferences for channels, billing cycles or refunds. The SMS should be computerized and capable to record the vital information and data concerning the subscribers such as name, address, contact number of subscribers etc. along with the channels or bouquet of channels subscribed by the subscribers.

The service providers have been advised by TRAI to use electronic Customer Application Forms (e-CAF) to bring efficiencies in providing and managing the services to the subscribers. To create the awareness about the provisions of the Regulations, the Authority has taken several measures to educate the service providers. Several interactions were held in past to make aware about the provisioning of Customer Application Forms. 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' were also issued to MSOs and LCOs. Directions were also issued in past, to MSOs and LCOs to comply with the provisions of the regulations on Customer Application Forms and SMS.

(d) and (e):
To steer the process of Cable TV Digitisation, a Task Force, comprising of all stakeholders, was constituted by the Ministry under the chairpersonship of the Additional Secretary. Monthly meetings of the Task Force were held to assess the progress and to identify issues, if any.

Also since the involvement of State Government is vital for the implementation of DAS, Ministry had got state and District level nodal officers nominated. 2 workshops of the State level nodal officers and 11 of State/District level nodal officers were held to acquaint them about their role. 12 Regional Units have been established for coordination. A multi-lingual toll free helpline (1800 180 4343) has been established to answer queries of the all stakeholders. A Management Information System (MIS) has been deployed for online collection of status of installation of STBs by different operators.

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